

Divergent Priorities Though Democrats capitulated to the president's spending total, they left their stamp on the omnibus by boosting funding for their priorities while providing less than the president wanted for some of his.

"This bill is wholly inadequate to meet the needs of the country here at home," said House Appropriations Committee Chairman David R. Obey , D-Wis.

Obey added that he had wanted to include \$3.7 billion in additional veterans' funding as part of the base bill or, barring that, as emergency funding without any strings. "So this is the only other way to force a resolution which I think will favor the veterans," he said.

Meanwhile, some Republicans were urging a veto over earmarks. They also were upset about the brief time frame in which members were able to examine the bill before voting. The text was not posted online until around midnight Sunday, with the House set to vote late Monday night.

"This omnibus bill still spends too much, includes over 9,000 earmarks, is loaded with accounting gimmicks, and members of Congress were given 24 hours to review all 3,000 pages of it. I urge the president to veto it," said Rep. John Campbell , R-Calif, chairman of the Republican Study Committee's budget and spending task force.

Congress has enacted one fiscal 2008 spending bill so far this year, Defense (PL 110-116).

The House took two votes on the spending package Monday night because technically it was considering amendments to the Senate amendment to the State-Foreign Operations bill (HR 2764).

The first amendment, adopted 253-154, contained funding for the 11 remaining appropriations bills, as well as \$11.2 billion in emergency funding. The second, adopted 206-201, added \$31 billion to the package for military operations in Afghanistan and some troop protection programs.

The amendments will be sent to the Senate, where the chamber can amend them further, at which point the package would be sent back to the House for a final vote. This procedural maneuvering potentially allows the House to hold separate votes on Senate-added Iraq War funding and the domestic funding sections of the bill.

This could lead House leaders to set up separate final votes on domestic and war funding before the bill is cleared. This would allow anti-war Democrats to vote for domestic programs but against war funding, without sinking the package.